

Status of N.H. National Guard deployed units as of July 19, 2004

Total number of NH National Guardsmen: 2,700

NH Army National Guard: 1,700. 900 mobilized.
800 in Iraq, 60 in Afghanistan, 17 training in Indiana for Afghanistan mission.
30 at Pease Air National Guard Base

NH Air National Guard: 1,000. 25 mobilized*
9 in Iraq, 1 in Afghanistan, 15 at locations in Spain/Germany/US

Number of NH Guardsmen overseas: 870

Number of NH Guardsmen instate: 1,800

***an additional 200 Air Guardsmen are on active duty, most serving at Pease**

- 1. Detachment 2, 169th Military Police Company, based in Concord.** (RETURNED TO NH ON JULY 1) Six soldiers were in Guantanamo Bay since August 2003 performing guard and security operations at detention facilities.
- 2. C Company, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), based in Manchester.** Known as the Mountain Company.
 - a. Eight soldiers in Afghanistan since September 2003 training and patrolling with members of the Afghan National Army.
 - b. 180 soldiers in Iraq conducting security and patrol operations.
- 3. 744th Transportation Company, based in Hillsboro, with armories in Claremont and Somersworth.** 150 soldiers in Iraq conducting transportation missions.
- 4. Headquarters, 197th Field Artillery, based in Manchester.** 110 soldiers in Iraq. The unit is a command and control element for three battalions conducting security missions.
- 5. 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery, based in Berlin with armories in Lancaster, Littleton, Plymouth, Woodsville, Lebanon and Franklin.** 180 soldiers in Iraq conducting security missions.
- 6. 1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery, based in Manchester with armories in Rochester, Portsmouth, Milford and Nashua.**
 - a. 180 soldiers in Iraq conducting security missions.
 - b. 30 soldiers of Charlie Battery, from the Portsmouth Armory, augmenting security operations at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington.
- 7. 210th Engineer Detachment, based in Peterborough.** 50 soldiers in Afghanistan providing engineering and construction support for Operation Enduring Freedom.
- 8. Logistics Readiness Squadron, 157th Air Refueling Wing, based at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington.** Five airmen (drivers) in Iraq supporting U.S. Army missions. Maj. Michael Mawson arrived in Afghanistan earlier this month.
- 9. 260th Air Traffic Control/Communications Flight, based at Pease.** Three air traffic controllers and one member of State Headquarters in Iraq. Lt. Col. Scott Normandeau returned Afghanistan earlier this month after helping to establish the country's communication system.
- 10. Combat Service Support Team, 3rd Brigade.** 17 NH Army National Guard soldiers representing different units and specialties will deploy to Afghanistan to provide mentorship to Afghan National Army in a variety of fields to include transportation, ordnance, signal, logistics, medical, maintenance, supply, personnel and motor pool operations. The unit is currently stationed in Indiana for pre-mobilization training. They are expected to deploy to Afghanistan in August.

* **Note: 3643rd Maintenance Company, based in Concord** has provided more than half its guardsmen to augment deploying units.

UPDATES FROM UNIT COMMANDERS IN THEATER

Editor's Note: The following updates were emailed by the unit commanders. They were slightly edited for grammar and operational security.

744th Transportation Company

Capt. Mary Bergner, of Hampton, is commander of the 744th Transportation Company. The unit arrived in Iraq in early March. Its mission has been to transport dry goods, water, food, petroleum products and general supplies to ground units.

The 744th TC has completed its fifth month in country with more than 360,000 miles driven and 14,000 short tons hauled. The month was very eventful with challenges and opportunities given to the soldiers for them to successfully engage.

The bulk of the missions were to deliver parts, supplies, and food to a place called Al Taquadam, but we call it TQ for short. The missions were one of the longest that our company did, totaling 10 hours for one round trip. The 1st Infantry Division and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force were the benefactors of the supplies delivered, and the Marines made sure we got there safe with continuous patrols on the ground and in the air.

The start times for the missions changed dramatically with the introduction of nighttime operations. The company responded well with the shift to total night operations, although it took some getting used to. The day to night changes offered the soldiers a chance to train during cooler weather as the temperatures rose to an average of 125 degrees during the daytime.

With night operations under way in late June, the company did two weeks worth of missions to TQ. They were not without challenges.

The night operation missions were established to confuse the enemy insurgents and open the roads up some more since traffic was sparse at night. The 744th experienced some notable contacts with the enemy. 3rd platoon received small arms fire from passing vehicles filled with insurgents. The convoy, led by 1st Lt. Kenneth Cox of Concord reacted quickly and engaged the enemy successfully. Sgt. Tim Colby of Northwood, one of the personnel on the rear gun truck, received a wound to his chest as an enemy bullet strafed his chest and left a burn on his skin. Sgt. Colby was incredibly lucky and his wounds did not call for him to be hospitalized. By the start of his two-week leave, his wound had healed but he will always carry a scar on his chest as a reminder.

Another convoy led by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Roberts of Charlestown earned the right to be called "combat experienced" as their mission to TQ in late June was full of mortars, RPG's, and bullets being fired at them. The convoy, despite all of the enemy fire thrown at them, returned successfully with no injuries.

The night operations provided many challenges to the soldiers of the 744th, but one that was felt the most was maintenance. The 744th has always prided itself as having ingenious soldiers that have a wealth of knowledge from their civilian background. Nevermore was this true than on the many night missions to TQ. Whether it was fixing flat tires in the middle of the road or hauling a broken down gun truck, the maintenance teams were there to do a quick, correct job. Sgt. Dan Hamel of Rutland, VT and a member of 2nd Platoon was always reliable when it came to emergency repair jobs during a mission. His civilian knowledge of trucks and tools provided convoys extra assurance that they would make it back to LSA Anaconda (744th base camp). Once back at LSA A, the maintenance section continues to repair the trucks at a level that is higher than their

tasked to assure they get back on the road as soon as possible. The maintenance team has incredible soldiers that truly take pride in each and every truck as their own and assisting the drivers to have as safe as mission as possible.

The long awaited transfer of sovereignty happened two days earlier than expected (June 28) and on that day the 744th embarked on its biggest and longest mission. The 1st Armor Division had finally been given their orders to redeploy (*return to home station*) and with that they needed trucks to haul their assets and equipment to Kuwait.

The 744th TC tasked out 20 total trucks (40 personnel) for the start of the projected two-month mission. 1st Platoon, led by 1st Lt. Ana Cutting of Penacook and Sgt. 1st Class Philip Tirrell of Salisbury took the duties of officer and noncommissioned officer in charge of the first leg. The basic concept of the mission was to haul the unit's equipment down to Kuwait with frequent stops to pick up more equipment. The mission provided the soldiers a chance to escape the "hot" zone of Iraq and get a respite in a safer place like Kuwait.

Many soldiers in the 744th want a mission like this because it makes the days pass by much quicker and gives them wholesome work. The mission calls for the 744th TC to be employed to the unit move for up to two months. Soldiers will get switched out so that most everyone in the company gets a chance to participate in the mission. A satellite operations center was established in Kuwait, led by Staff Sgt. Robert Shea of Concord, Staff Sgt. Mark Chateaufneuf of Center Barnstead and Staff Sgt. David Perez of Tilton. The operations center was established to ensure that the soldiers of the 744th were being taken care of and to keep a solid line of communications with the headquarter staff back at Anaconda. The mission, to this date, is still in operation with successful results.

We have also participated in deploying the 10th Mountain Division into Iraq. The 10th MTN was very appreciative and impressed with the soldiers and their abilities. The Brigade operations officer who was traveling north in the convoy, summed it up by saying, "You have some ROAD WARRIORS. It is amazing what you do. Who would have thought truck drivers do so much."

They are amazing, I told him. The 88M (army job code for truck driver) has truly been defined by Operation Iraqi Freedom 2. Our soldiers thrive on being on the road and making things happen regardless of the threat level. They are line haul experts, force protection guru's, foreign national educators, cargo coordinators, and in true Yankee fashion, excellent 'scroungers.' They deliver. Their level of responsibility is so much more than just driving a truck. They assist with their upload and download, obtain accommodations, and assess threat levels. We have some of the best E-4's that you could ask for.

Soldiers returning from their two weeks of leave have been all smiles from getting a taste of home and feeling the love and support from family and friends. Nothing we do can compare to family and friends love and support. This is what makes the most difference for the soldier's morale. This is why once again I must mention the 744th Family Support Group and how thankful we all are that we have so much involvement, love and effort. It truly makes a difference!

The past month provided many challenges to the soldiers of the 744th TC, but they have overcome them and this will make lesser challenges easier to handle as they head into their sixth month of deployment overseas.

I would also like to personally thank all of you back there that pray for us daily. A specific mention must go to the State Command Sgt. Maj., Michael Rice and 54th Troop Commander Lt. Col. Robert Tetreault for looking out for the soldiers that have returned to the states for follow-up medical treatment. Taking that personal interest and time

makes all the difference. A "What Can We Do To Help You" attitude is the most that our leadership team here can ask for.

Company C, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry (Regiment)
"Mountain Company"

Capt. Raymond Valas, of Goffstown, is commander of C Company, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry (Mountain). C Company's missions have included convoy security, main supply route security, route reconnaissance, cordon and search and joint patrols with members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. The unit arrived in Iraq in late March.

For part of his update, Valas submitted a letter written by Steve Heiden, a civilian convoy commander with KBR. Valas explained, "Mr. Heiden sought out the company from his camp, which lies hundreds of miles away, to personally thank some of the C/3-172 Infantry (Mountain) soldiers for saving the lives of many of his drivers. His letter meant a lot to all of us, because it was unsolicited and he had to go through great lengths to find our Company headquarters location. Out of the two-dozen units that provide security and reconnaissance for the fuel movement, he took the time to single out and thank the Mountain Infantry for their performance. The men he wrote about were engaged in daily combat operations, fighting to keep the major thoroughfares of Iraq open and safe. When civilians were wounded, Staff Sgt. Charles Campbell of Meredith and his men repeatedly risked their own lives to administer aid and repel attacks. It is a great reflection of the professionalism and warrior spirit of the soldiers and non-commission officers of the Mountain Infantry."

The letter reads: "I am writing this letter to commend all the members of the 3/172nd Infantry Brigade for their outstanding performance during escort duty of my JP-8 Tanker Convoys into Iraq during the months of May and June 2004.

Routes north into Iraq include many miles of rough dirt roads and some narrow, two-lane highway that passes through several heavily populated Iraqi towns and villages. There are several "trouble spots" along the way where we routinely encounter problems with the local populace.

During the convoy movement escorted by members of the 3/172nd Infantry, civilian traffic was heavy, congested and often aggressive. During the movement, leaders from the 3/172nd unit used excellent verbal skills and radio communication procedures to keep convoy members informed of the ever-changing road and traffic conditions; helped in blocking and securing intersections and danger zones far enough in advance to allow uninterrupted convoy movement through these congested areas.

Despite the rough roads, heavy traffic and large number of vehicles in the convoy, our convoy was escorted to its destination without delays and with only minimum disruption to the civilian traffic.

The soldiers of the 3/172nd Infantry Brigade are some of the most safety conscious professionals I have worked with and their effort is greatly appreciated.

Although every one in the unit always performed by text book standards, the following officers went beyond the standard to ensure the safety and welfare of everyone in the convoy: Staff Sgt. Charles Campbell (of Meredith); Sgt. James Tomilson (of Deerfield), Sgt. Patrick Clark (of Chichester), Sgt. Esty and Sgt. Philip Hill (of Penacook).

The display of professionalism, proficiency and concern for the safety of others reflects great credit on the 3/172nd Infantry Brigade and their command."

In addition to the letter, Valas submitted a photo (included in your CD) of one of his soldiers, Spec. Thomas Recke of Denver, Colorado. In the photo, he and Spec. Christopher McWilliams of Manchester are standing with two Iraqi Army soldiers before conducting a joint operation. Valas was deeply impressed with the story behind Recke's decision to deploy with the Mountain Company. He shares Recke's story in the following passage:

Spec. Recke moved to Denver in December. When he heard that C Company was deploying, he left his household goods in storage out west and came back to NH to

deploy with the Mountain Company. "I knew that I would probably get deployed, and there is no other unit I would rather go into harm's way with," he said. Spec. Recke had just driven 3,500 miles from the New Hampshire seacoast to Denver, with plans of a new job and continuing work on his Bachelor's degree that had begun at UNH. He had been in Colorado for five days when he heard his friends were heading to Iraq. "I got in the car and drove 900 miles to Montana to store my stuff at my Dad's house, then drove right back to New Hampshire to make the first formation on time," said the son of retired Air Force Master Sergeant Alan Recke. "My Dad understood what I was doing, and why I was doing it. He was in the military and knows what it means to really be a part of something."

Spec. Recke was already transferred out of the Mountain Infantry, and did not have to deploy with us. He already had a new assignment in a unit that was not deploying. He was 'safe.' Despite already having served 5 years of active duty as a Navy Submariner, he felt he still had an obligation to his country and his brothers in the Mountain Infantry. The underlying reason behind all of the successes of Company C is that we have soldiers who truly believe in what they are doing, and understand the reasons for the hardship we endure. Spec. Recke sets an example of selfless service for all of us.

Recke is an uparmored humvee driver and gunner. His squad conducts ambushes, movement to contact, route reconnaissance, and joint combat patrols with the Iraqi Army.

210th Engineer Detachment

Capt. Craig Lapiana, of Merrimack, is commander of the 210th Engineer Detachment. His unit has been in Afghanistan since early March. The unit is supporting engineer and construction projects. Like Valas, Lapiana submitted a letter from a Marine commander as a way updating us on his unit's progress. It was written by Maj. Mark Gerhard, whose Marine engineering unit is stationed at Bagram Air Base. The letter reads:

"Per our conversation today, after you honored us the privilege of awarding your fine soldiers their due recognition during your formation, I expressed our genuine appreciation of what they had done for us at Camp Teufelhunden. I would again like to extend to you, and to the great state of New Hampshire, our hearty thanks and gratitude for sending such a skilled and professional group of soldiers to our camp, making our duty here in Afghanistan much more efficient and enjoyable.

As you mentioned, the United States Marine Corps holds itself to the highest of military standards. In my assessment and with this in mind, Sgt. Mark Plummer (of Concord), Spec. Bruce Grant (of Gardner Mass.), Spec. Robert Carpenter (of Northfield), and their compatriots have attained or exceeded this standard in a multitude of ways.

Their professionalism, carpentry skills, and soldierly values reflect highly upon your leadership and the strong bond they share as National Guard engineers.

I am a naval aviator by trade, but am serving as an engineering officer for a reserve Marine Wing Support Squadron, which has a heavy concentration of combat engineers. I can honestly say without hesitation, that I would be proud to have any of them serve as engineers in my squadron.

As descendants of American Revolutionary War General John Stark's New Hampshire Militia, you have carried this legacy proudly and convincingly. The citizens of New Hampshire should be proud of your accomplishments, and know that your soldier's and their family's sacrifices have been for the betterment of the Combined Joint Task Force here at Bagram Air Field, and for the free people of Afghanistan. We, the Marines and sailors of Camp Teufelhunden, salute you and the soldiers of the 210th Engineer Detachment for your dedication to service and your 'one team, one fight' attitude!"

Headquarters, 197th Field Artillery Brigade

Col. James Guise of Tucson, Arizona is commander for HQ, 197th FAB, which arrived in Iraq in early March. Its mission is to provide command and control of three subordinate field artillery battalion, which are each from a different state. Command and control functions include mission assignments, providing and coordinating logistics support, maintaining morale, welfare and unit discipline. The three battalions assigned to HQ, 197th FAB are from the West Virginia, South Dakota and South Carolina Army National Guards.

The 197th Field Artillery Brigade has been in theater for almost five months now. The brigade headquarters and the majority of its three battalions are located in the southeastern part of Iraq near the city of An Nasariyah. There are over 1,300 soldiers under the control of Headquarters & Headquarters Battery, 197th FAB. The majority of the brigade is located at Camp Cedar, but we have batteries and sections spread out over 26 remote locations.

Last month I reported on the important missions of our three battalions here in theater. 1-201st FA from West Virginia has the primary mission of conducting convoy security for Southern Iraq. 2-147th FA from South Dakota is securing stockpiles of captured enemy ammunition at various sites in southern Iraq and working with civilian contractors so that it can be destroyed.

The 3-178th FA from South Carolina continues to provide security for fixed communication sites. They also provide quick reaction forces to assist units traveling along the main supply route in our area, and relay medical evacuation requests for them in times of emergency.

We are actually located in the Multinational Division South East sector of Iraq. We have had the unique opportunity to work with various coalition forces such as the British, Italians, Koreans, and Romanians. This month I would like to spotlight a few of the soldiers from New Hampshire and the missions they have conducted.

Sgt. Mark Canavan, from Nashua, is a Gun-truck Team Leader for HHB 197th FAB. He was cited by the operations officer for the Gulf Region Southern District, Multinational District South East for his efforts during a critical reconstruction project. He showed exceptional professionalism and initiative in coordinating traffic control and security while a 4000 kv power line was being strung across a major roadway. He was instrumental in coordinating the efforts between the multinational forces and civilian contractors. Canavan took it upon himself to come forward and assist in the communications flow between the civilian contractors and the coalition forces actually closing the road. Without his fast and effective action, the operation would not have gone as smoothly.

Capt. Sean Bennett from Berlin, our headquarters battery commander, has developed a close working relationship with the Republic of Korea Army forces stationed nearby. He, along with Gun Truck teams lead by Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Stewart from Raymond, and Sgt. Mark Canavan from Nashua have escorted Korean Army re-supply convoys to Kuwait and back.

Our unit was personally requested by the Korean forces for these security missions based upon our reputation for handling diverse missions with expertise and professionalism.

In the first week of July we conducted a medical assistance mission with Romanian forces to Qarah Bashi, one of the many remote villages of Dhi Qar Province. Our vehicle

drivers during the six-hour trip were Spec. Mellisa Kimball from Manchester and Spec. Bonnie Wright from Wentworth. Lt. Col. Michael McGandy from Manchester, our brigade executive officer, coordinated the operation, and Lt. Col. Patrick Tangney from Dayton, Maine, our brigade surgeon, provided medical care to dozens of men, women and children. In addition to providing the much needed medical care, we also brought 500 gallons of potable water to the villagers. The Romanians provided security and distributed food to the Iraqi people.

Sgt. 1st Class Scott Canavan from Nashua and Spec. Jason Larochelle from Raymond participated with Italian and Romanian forces that were conducting patrols in the local area. This mission enhanced our interoperability with coalition forces and increased our intelligence sections situational awareness for our area of operations.

Our staff had the opportunity to give a briefing to Task Force Scorpion, the Romanian Combat Infantry Brigade. Lt. Col. James Moody from Manchester and Warrant Officer 1Darin Melanson from Fremont briefed the Romanian commander and staff on our operations and the intelligence activities in our area.

Soldiers from our Common Ground Station section supported British operations for Multination Division South East. This provided a once in a lifetime opportunity for our soldiers to operate with our British allies. The mission was lead by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ed Olsen from Wilmington, MA along with Sgt. Ken Welsby from Rochester, Sgt. Donald Huntington from Manchester, Sgt. Jason Longval from Penacook, and Spec. Adria Hadlock from Parsonsfield, ME. Welsby even had the chance to play his bagpipes with the Regimental Bagpiper for the British Division.

These are just of a few of varied and exciting missions that our brave and dedicated soldiers from the 197th Brigade are conducting in Iraq.

2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Forward

***Capt. Matt Boucher**, of Barrington, is commander of 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Forward. His unit consists of four platoons each of which is conducting a variety of security missions. The unit is known as "White Mountain Thunder"*

The 2nd Platoon continues to work with the Iraqi Police in Ba'Qubah along with a platoon from the 293rd Military Police Company (*regular army unit*) at the Diayla Provisional Police Headquarters. Since the transfer of sovereignty in June, they (*the 293rd*) have stepped back and are taking more of an advisor and mentoring role in the police station's operations. The Iraqi Police (IPs) have really picked up the ball and are running with it. Now armed with heavier weapons to counter the insurgent threat, they have stepped up patrols of the city, conducted flash checkpoints on their own, and are working hard with investigations into the various groups in the area, both insurgent and criminal. It is wonderful to see them taking ownership of the security situation here.

Our element here continues to work with the Iraqi Police Academy as well. We recently graduated another 57 students from the three-week course (*photos on CD*). In the next couple cycles, we'll get into a team teaching mode with the goal of the Iraqi instructors taking control in the next couple months.

The following was submitted by 1st Lt. Aaron Noyes of Littleton who is Boucher's 3rd Platoon leader: The 3rd Platoon (Bladerunners) in Mosul, the northern city of Iraq, has been involved in several raids in conjunction with the Iraqi National Guard. These raids were ordered by the mayor of Mosul in order to capture the people responsible for attacks on Iraqi and American forces. The raids have yielded the arrest of a dozen suspects and

uncovered caches of IED making material, mortar tubes, weapons, as well as several foreign nationals.

The 3rd Platoon continues missions in direct support of Stryker Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division (*regular army unit*), and conducts 24-hour patrols in the city of Mosul, working with the Iraqi Police to strengthen their ability to manage the city.

The following was submitted by Boucher's 1st Platoon leader, 1st Lt. Gregory Fillion of Littleton: The 1st Platoon steadfastly continues to perform the myriad of combat patrol escort missions assigned by the 1st Infantry Division. We have conducted over 130 combat patrol escorts, logging in excess of 15,000 miles, traveling everywhere from Baghdad to Bayji, Kirkuk to Najaf, Mosul to Kuwait and virtually everywhere in between. We have provided numerous escorts and a multitude of supply convoys. 1st Platoon has also provided security for the weekly Abu Ghraib detainee releases and serves as augmentees for force protection missions in Tikrit. The men of the 1st Platoon have conducted all assigned missions with stoic resolution, pride, professionalism and high esprit de corps.

Boucher continues: The 4th Platoon continues to provide security for the Tikrit Police Academy. Our soldiers remain vigilante in the face of long days in the summer heat. Steadfast alertness and favorable force protection have deterred any attacks thus far. The police academy continues to grow, evolve and become more independent. The goal of standing up the Iraqi Police force is progressing well. The facility's operations and classroom instruction are now carried out by Iraqi instructors. The security duties are now shared by both U.S. and Iraqi forces. Mentoring by our soldiers of the Iraqi guards at the academy continues toward the eventual goal of complete handover once we depart Iraq. This transition is critical for the stability and viability of the new Iraqi government. The soldiers of the 4th Platoon are performing their mission with pride and honor. They have formed numerous friendships with the people of Iraq and will leave a positive image of America in their wake. The City of Tikrit and the country of Iraq will be a better place due to their efforts.

Our support troops of 2-197th FA (MP) are performing their jobs admirably. The bulk of the Mess Section (*food service*) has been assigned to the Operations Section to maintain 24-hour operations of the Provost Marshall Office and the company Tactical Operations Center at the Division Main Palace in Tikrit as well as the company Tactical Operations Center in Ba'Qubah. Our mechanics are working diligently to keep the unit's vehicles running, often a daunting task in the desert environment. Logisticians are hard at work providing the badly needed supplies to sustain the company. Communications personnel work daily to ensure that all elements of the unit can talk with each other via radio or landline as well as assist the other headquarters elements in conduct of their missions. Administration is busy providing U.S. mail delivery, processing leave requests, handling emergency Red Cross messages, maintaining personnel records and completing the plethora of personnel transactions of the company. "White Mountain Thunder" is serving with pride and distinction and all assigned anxiously await our return home.

1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery Forward

Capt. Eric Fessenden, of Windham is commander of 1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery Forward. His unit arrived in Iraq in early March. The unit has been conducting security operations.

Marauder Company continues to operate out of southern Iraq performing a wide range of Military Police missions. We conduct daily escort missions between Kuwait and Iraq,

providing security for both civilian and military convoys. We also provide convoy escorts for vehicles going to Basrah, as well as security for prisoner movement convoys to and from Baghdad. Additionally, 1/172nd provides the exterior security for our camp, which involves manning the perimeter towers, searching people and vehicles at our entry gates, and conducting vehicle patrols in the local area.

Finally, our company provides a small number of soldiers to perform a detainee guard mission in our camp's internment facility. As you can see, our missions are varied but our soldiers perform each of them with the same high level of motivation and professionalism.

One of the unique aspects of being stationed in the southern part of Iraq is the opportunity to work with other coalition forces. We have especially developed a solid relationship with the British security forces, and we recently began conducting joint patrolling operations with them. This close cooperation recently paid off when the Iraqi Police force reported to us the location of an enemy rocket launch site. Our area patrol - consisting of Staff Sgt. Ryan McCarthy of Wakefield, Sgt. Brian Campbell of Attleboro, Mass., Sgt. Charles Jones of Keene, Spec. Kaleb Hazen of Keene, Spec. George Dawson of Manchester and Private 1st Class Donald Gates of Freemont - quickly responded to the site and set up security alongside the British while an explosive ordnance team defused the rockets. This is but one example of how we are working with our coalition partners to make Iraq safer.

Several of our soldiers have recently been recognized for their outstanding performance during our deployment. In June, Spec Francis Hyland of Nashua, Spec. Brian Ayotte of New Hampton and Private 1st Class Sean O'Leary of Nashua received brigade coins from the 16th Military Police Brigade commander and the command sergeant major. During our July 4th celebration, Spec. Jared Walker of Enfield received a Certificate of Achievement from the brigade in recognition of the strong leadership skills he has demonstrated with his team.

Finally, I'd like to thank the families and friends of the 172nd soldiers for their support to date. I appreciate all the gifts and letters of support we have received, and the sacrifices you are making during our deployment. Believe me, you play a vital role in the success of 172nd's mission.

Logistics Readiness & Communications Squadrons, 157th Air Refueling Wing

Master Sgt. Phillip F. Cote, of the Logistics Readiness Squadron, submitted the following update. He and four other members of the Squadron have been in Iraq since early April and are attached to the 2632rd Air Expeditionary Force Truck Company. Cote is the Fourth Platoon Leader.

As I sit here typing this update, I have looked at the date several times to make sure that the date was correct, and it is indeed the 13th of July. Time has gone by quickly for us over here. The tempo can be draining at times on the five of us. All of us are safe and sound.

The days go by very fast, from the time that we are handed our mission, to the time that we return to what we now refer to as "home" seems like just minutes. Some of our missions go without a hitch, we like those, then we have some that are not entirely too much fun.

We take every precaution to ensure our safety and the safety of the convoys to which we are assigned to protect. To date the five of us have collectively run well over 100

missions and accumulated over 100,000 accident free miles. We stay focused on our task at hand.

Tomorrow will be an historic occasion for us. We will be awarded Army combat patches. As far as I know, I am not aware of any Air Force transportation airmen having ever received the distinction. I am very proud of this group and all the people who are assigned to the 2632nd Air Expeditionary Force Truck Company.

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